

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health of the Urban District of Farnham,

FOR 1897.

I beg to report that during the year 1897 the number of cases of Zymotic Disease notified to me (exclusive of those brought into the Union Infectious Wards from outside the Urban District Council's area) was 39, a larger number than in either of the last three years, due principally to the large number of cases of Scarlatina. Besides these notified cases there have been cases of Influenza throughout the year, but with only one death attributable to it, this making one hope, together with the comparative mildness of most of the recent cases, that this complaint in its present epidemic form is likely to subside soon. Whooping cough, too, has caused two deaths. The following table will show the distribution throughout the year of notifiable cases.

	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Puerperal Fever.	Membranous Croup.
January..	1	..	..	1	..	..
February	1	..	..	2	..	..
March ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
April ...	4	..	..	1	..	..
May	1	..	..	..	..	1
June	1	..	..	1	..	..
July	3	..	..	..	..	..
August ..	2	3	..	1	1	..
September	1	..	2	3	..	..
October ..	1	2	..	1	..	..
November	4	..	..	..	..	..
December	1	..	..	..	..	..

Scarlatina.—There have been 20 cases during the year. This is an unusually large number, but they have been mostly in single cases, and not in sufficient numbers together, to constitute an epidemic at any time. In 8 instances there was only one case; of these one was removed to the Infectious Wards at the Union and 7 were nursed at home; in 2 instances a second child in the same house became infected, but it did not spread outside the house, though in neither of these cases was the first patient removed; and in one instance, that of the School in Castle Street, 5 children failed (3 boarders and 2 day boys), but here also, by taking immediate steps to isolate the patients and close the school, a threatened epidemic was avoided. The points to which I would draw attention from the foregoing history are, I think, two, namely: (1) The great assistance compulsory notification is to the Medical Officer of Health in giving him *immediate* notice of the first case of Scarlatina, so enabling him to take protective measures against an epidemic while it is still easy to do so; (2) The importance of having an Infectious Hospital to send the first cases to, because such a large proportion of parents object to sending their children to the Union Infectious Wards.

Diphtheria.—5 cases occurred. Three of them we in one house in Gomer Terrace, Hale Road, in August. They were all three removed to the Infectious Wards of the Union, and one of them died there. The infection in this case was, in my opinion brought down by a child who came to them from London on a visit, because of illness in its own home, and this illness was ascertained to be of the nature of sore throat: at the same time the sanitary condition of Gomer Terrace was found to be bad: since then the whole property has been re-drained, the well closed and town water laid on to the closets and for drinking. The disease did not spread beyond the house. At Wilton House, where a servant developed the disease, the drainage had been recently re-done. She was also removed to the Infectious Wards. At the cottage at Fir Grove Farm (Marshall), the remaining case, the drainage was most unsatisfactory, but has since been reconstructed.

Typhoid and Continued Fever.—I am glad I can report only two cases of Typhoid Fever, and they were both in one household at one time. The only supply of water for drinking was from a well, though town water was laid on to the closets for flushing: now the well has been closed and town water laid on for drinking.

No cases of continued fever have been notified during the year, so, instead of the 10 cases which appeared under this heading in 1896, we have only two this year, which I hope will remove our district from the bottom of the Typhoid Fever table for Surrey, which position the Council will remember it occupied last year.

Erysipelas.—9 cases have been reported as against 7 last year. I found in 5 of the nine cases closets, either not connected with the main or with no water laid on to them. In one case the premises were in good order, in one fairly good, in one only dirty, and in the remaining one the closets are close outside the back door, though otherwise in good order (Lowndes Buildings). It will be noticed further on in the Report how I was led, by illness in the houses in Mead Lane, to inspect and report on the row of closets so close to the backs of the houses.

Puerperal Fever.—Only one case in the year. It was in a house in Factory Yard, where the back yard was very small and confined, very dirty, and having a closet with no water laid on to it. The premises have been much improved since.

Membranous Croup.—Also only one case, in Bear Lane, where the closet was very old, just outside the back door, and with no water laid on to it.

Influenza.—There have been cases at intervals, and one death has been attributed to it.

Whooping Cough.—There has been no widespread epidemic, but a good many cases at times, and it was responsible for two deaths in the early part of the year.

Measles.—A few cases in the early part of the year.

Isolation Hospital.—The negotiations for the construction of this necessary building have been now completed, and it is hoped that a Hospital will be in existence in the course of the year 1898. Owing to notice having been given by the Guardians that no cases of Infectious Disease from outside their own walls would be received into their Infectious Wards after 31st December, 1897, arrangements have been made for erecting a temporary iron building to receive cases till the permanent Hospital is finished.

Sewage Farm.—Many and great complaints having been made by both private individuals and the Rural District Council about the smell from the Farm, which permeates the surrounding atmosphere, and which follows on the daily pumping, the Council have set on foot some experiments managed by their Surveyor, to ascertain if possible the exact cause of the smell and some method of preventing it. The experiments not being complete no report can be made on the subject at present.

Water Supply.—Not much progress has been made in the effort to enforce the supply of water to the premises which were found in such numbers without a sufficient water closet, and which were reported on to the Council by their Medical Officer in the summer of 1896 (see Sec. 36), a considerable proportion being in the same condition still, as before that Report. An analysis of the water supplied by the Farnham Water Company was made last autumn, and shows it to be a water of unusual purity. The supply also is ample for the needs of the town. Provision has been made for a supply to the Isolation Hospital.

Houses unfit for human habitation.—I reported a house occupied by Mrs. Blackman of Abbey Street in June as unfit for habitation and in a dangerous condition, but no action appears to have been taken in the matter.

At the Council's request I inspected on November 18th, a row of 5 cottages, called Burningham's Buildings in Bridge Square and found them very badly constructed and inferior cottages and the yard in front in a very dirty and unsatisfactory state. I considered the end house unfit for habitation.

Miscellaneous—In my report of March 2nd I mentioned an objectionable closet at 52, Downing Street, nothing has been done to remedy this.

In my report of April 6th I mentioned some very unsatisfactory premises, 47, East Street, and adjoining houses, nothing has been done to remedy this.

In my report of May 4th I mentioned a cottage in Bear Lane which was in a bad sanitary condition, no improvement has been effected here.

In May, having heard that Mrs. Cole and her family living at Bourne Place were constantly ailing and that her Doctor thought the condition of her premises was the probable cause, I inspected the premises and found that there was only an earth closet with no earth supplied, and the only water supply from a well some 20 yards away across the road; nothing has been done to improve these defects.

In August, in consequence of a complaint I inspected No. 1, Abbey Street, and found the premises not in good sanitary order, but this has since been remedied.

My attention was also called, in August, by illness to that part of Mead Lane where 2 rows of cottages lie, one just behind the other and I found the sanitary arrangements both as to closets, and ash-pits were very bad. I understand very little has been done to remedy this though the owner intimated his intention of making considerable improvements.

At the request of the Council I inspected on November 18th the Hatch Mill Dairy. I found the surroundings very dirty, the washing of the floor of the dairy going direct into a branch of the river; and a closet in an out-house also drained direct into the same piece of the river. This has been improved.

It having been suggested to me by one of the Schoolmistresses of one of the Public Elementary Schools that it would be very useful to them to receive a notification from the Medical Officer of Health as to when it would be safe to take back to school children from a house where infectious disease has occurred, I have, with the approval of the Council had printed a certificate of which the following is a copy.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATION ACT, 1889.

Information having been given to the Medical Officer of Health for the Farnham Urban District Council under the above-mentioned Act that

of
is suffering from

Notice is hereby given to the Managers and Teachers of the
School, that no child residing at the above address can be safely allowed to attend
School until after the day of , 189

Medical Officer of Health.

And I hope that this may tend to lessen the danger of the spread of disease through contact of the children at School.

Death Rate.--This comes out even more favourable than last year, though that was better than 1895. There has been no epidemic, largely fatal like the Measles epidemic of that year. The rate for all ages is 11.62. The deaths of infants are less, in spite of a large amount of summer diarrhoea prevalent in the late summer. The birth rate is rather larger again. The following table showing the distribution and percentages of deaths has been constructed rather differently giving separate columns for those in the Union imported from outside our district, which makes it more clear. The percentages are calculated on an estimated population of 5850.

	DEATHS IN TOWN.			BIRTHS.	DEATHS IN UNION.			BIRTHS.
	Totals.	Zymotic Disease.	Under 1 Year.		Totals.	Zymotic Disease.	Under 1 Year.	
January	4	1	..	8	2	1	..	..
February	9	..	2	14	8	..	..	3
March	10	2	2	12	6	1	..	3
April	1	..	..	7	4	..	..	1
May	5	1	..	19	4	..	..	2
June	3	..	..	13	4	1	..	3
July	3	..	..	10	3	1	..	..
August	4	1	3	22	4	..	..	3
September	12	3	5	14	3	..	..	3
October	4	..	..	14	2	..	..	2
November	6	..	..	7	5	..	..	..
December	6	..	..	14	6	..	1	2
In Surrey C. Asylum	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..
In Guildford Hos...	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
TOTALS	68	8	12	154	53	4	1	22
Per 1000 per annum	11.62	1.37	2.05	26.32	..	..	..	..
Do. in 1896....	13.44	2.25	2.40	23.27	..	..	..	..
Do. in 1895....	16.53	1.74	3.48	30.46	..	..	..	..

S. G. SLOMAN,
Medical Officer of Health.

17th February, 1898.

